

CUNY Academic Commons - Support #1094

Blog privacy question

2011-07-31 11:36 AM - Matt Gold

Status:	Rejected	Start date:	2011-07-31
Priority name:	Normal	Due date:	
Assignee:	Boone Gorges	% Done:	0%
Category name:	WordPress (misc)	Estimated time:	0.00 hour
Target version:	Not tracked		
Description			
A member writes: "However, may I suggest a change to Academic Commons? I would suggest that if a blog creator does not wish to have his blog visible to search engines, that his blog is still searchable within the Commons and listed with all the other blogs. Don't you think this is reasonable?" Am I right that that allowing such blogs into the site feed would then make them visible to search engines? It seems to me we have a few options here to make this make more sense to users: 1) Allow sites with the "public, but search engines blocked" privacy setting to appear in our site feed (thus, perhaps, rendering the privacy setting inaccurate) 2) Alter the wording of the "More Privacy Settings" options to make it clear to users that only fully public blogs will show up in the site feeds and on the homepage 3) Create a new privacy options plugin that tries to address some of these issues What do you think? cc'ing Sarah on this, since she has been in touch with the user, and Chris, since this ticket involves UX issues			
Related issues:			
Related to CUNY Academic Commons - Feature #1105: Rephrase Blog Privacy Options		Assigned	2011-08-04
Has duplicate CUNY Academic Commons - Bug #1086: Blog not appearing on main C...		Duplicate	2011-07-28

History

#1 - 2011-07-31 11:59 AM - Boone Gorges

Am I right that that allowing such blogs into the site feed would then make them visible to search engines?

Yes and no. The way that the activity stream works, the title of the blog, as well as the excerpts of posts and comments that appear in the Commons main activity streams, will necessarily be available to search engines. However, we could make it so that anonymous users could not click through to the main content. IMO this is confusing for users and for authors, so I recommend against it.

With this consideration in mind, I would suggest going with (2) for the moment. In the future, BP activity streams may change in a way that will make the desired privacy settings possible; we can revisit the question at that point.

#2 - 2011-08-02 12:11 AM - Chris Stein

I agree with Boone that not allowing anonymous users to click through would be confusing.

I have a couple of questions to make sure I'm clear on what the current state is and what's being asked for.

Matt you mentioned "More Privacy Settings" is this different from the "Privacy Settings" in the Dashboard?
You also mentioned "public, but search engines blocked". Is this option 2 below?

These are the options I see for blog privacy in the dashboard

1. I would like my site to be visible to everyone, including search engines (like Google, Bing, Technorati) and archivers
2. I would like to block search engines, but allow normal visitors
3. I would like my blog to be visible only to registered users of CUNY Academic Commons
4. I would like my blog to be visible only to registered users I add to "cs"

5. I would like "cs" to be visible only to Admins.

Boone, under which of these settings to the blog and post excerpts appear in the Commons Activity Streams?

Also if they choose option 3 would their blog be searchable in the Commons and listed with other blogs if the user is logged in? or will it not appear? If you're not sure I can take a minute to test out the different options.

#3 - 2011-08-02 12:33 AM - Matt Gold

Hi Chris,

Thanks for your response. "More privacy settings" was a reference to the [WP plugin](#) (should have been "more privacy options") that creates five privacy options instead of the standard two. And, yes, I was referring to option 2 when I wrote "public, but search engines blocked."

It's my understanding that blogs that have anything other than option 1 enabled will not show up in activity streams, but Boone can answer in greater detail.

Best,

Matt

#4 - 2011-08-02 09:15 AM - Boone Gorges

It's my understanding that blogs that have anything other than option 1 enabled will not show up in activity streams

Correct.

if they choose option 3 would their blog be searchable in the Commons and listed with other blogs if the user is logged in?

I don't believe so. I think that any setting but 1 keeps you out of site searches, whether you're logged into the Commons or not.

#5 - 2011-08-02 03:34 PM - Chris Stein

Thanks for the answers guys.

In light of those, it does not seem like it is worth it to spend time creating a plugin or altering BP to change how things do into the activity stream.

It may be worth it to consider altering the text on those options (or adding clarifying pretext). If you would like me to take a shot at this I can do it and submit something for you all to consider.

Also another problem is that we don't really have control over the sitewide search right now. It's the custom Google Search and so its results depend on the Google indexing. The separate blogs search on the blogs page is different and as Boone noted, only includes blogs with option 1 selected. Also it only seems to search the blog titles while the sitewide search looks for post content (but then if you filter on blogs it filters out way too much; try searching for "learning" on both the blogs page and then the sitewide search filtered for blogs and compare results).

So it seems like in some ways this is part of a larger problem which is our search situation. A more robust search solution would allow us to control the results based on whether the searcher is logged in, and have more intelligence in limiting searches to blogs, groups etc.

That's a bigger issue and if we want to discuss it more it probably deserves a separate thread (there are a couple of search related issues out there).

Back to the issue at hand it seems to me like the only action to take would be a rephrasing of the privacy options for blogs and then possibly revisiting it if either the BP/WP privacy options change or we implement a more robust search solution.

#6 - 2011-08-04 12:01 PM - Matt Gold

- Status changed from Assigned to Rejected

Thanks, Chris.

So, let's do the following:

- 1) Come up with some new language for the blog privacy options to make the ramifications of those choices more clear
- 2) Restart discussions of site search
- 3) Reopen this question of privacy if and when BP activity streams change to support such work.

I'll start a new thread for (1)